



LAST MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

A summary of Burma-related issues
in the British Parliament and Europe

SEPT
2013

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Religious Violence

10 September 2013 Lord Alton of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the burning of Muslim homes in Sagaing, Burma.

The Senior Minister of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Warsi): We remain seriously concerned about the continuing trend of violence against Muslims across Burma following the burning of Muslim homes and shops in Sagaing Division on 24 August. We welcome the swift action taken by the Burmese police to arrest those accused of involvement in the 24 August attacks, and continue to call on the Burmese Government to ensure accountability in line with due legal process.

During the Burmese President's visit to the UK in July, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) pressed for further accountability for those involved in acts of violence against Muslims in Burma. We continue to raise our concerns with the Burmese Government about the need to tackle the root causes of the ongoing violence. We are also examining how we might provide support to develop capacity in the police force to tackle these types of incidents in line with international standards and are funding efforts to bring communities together through interfaith dialogue.

10 September 2013 Lord Alton of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that attacks on Muslims in Sagaing in Burma were instigated by Shin Wirathu and the nationalist organisation 969.

Baroness Warsi: On the evening of 24 August in the village of Htan Gone in northern Sagaing Division, a group of around 1,000 local people burned 44 Muslim homes and several Muslim-owned shops following the arrest of a man accused of rape.

We have received unconfirmed reports that there was dissemination of 969-related campaign materials in the area in the preceding weeks, but we have received no direct information that the 24 August violence was instigated by Shin Wirathu or 969-affiliated organisations.

President Thein Sein's Visit

02 September 2013 Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2013, Official Report, column 444W, on Burma, what the outcomes were and what actions were agreed as a result of his discussions with President Thein Sein on (a) progress on political and economic reform, including the need for responsible trade and investment, (b) the UK's concerns about Kachin and Rakhine states, (c) human rights and (d) the release of remaining political prisoners.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond (Yorks) (Mr Hague) on 17 July 2013, Official Report column 109WS.

The case of BawkJa, A Kachin activist, discussed in the House Debate

05 September 2013

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): May we have an urgent debate in Government time on Burma, where Daw BawkJa, a land rights activist, was arrested in July? In particular, will the Government support the United Nations General Assembly resolution noting that while there has been progress in Burma, there are still human rights and constitutional issues that need to be addressed?

Mr Lansley: The hon. Lady will know that my right hon. and hon. Friends at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office update the House regularly on Burma and our concerns. We were very pleased that President Thein Sein's visit to the United Kingdom in July gave us an opportunity to raise some of those concerns while reinforcing our determination to provide support for Burma, including the increases in humanitarian aid—I was looking up the numbers while the hon. Lady was asking her question—announced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), who was Secretary of State for International Development at the time.

The House will have welcomed your visit to Burma, Mr Speaker, from 29 July to 4 August, when you led a cross-party delegation of Members of Parliament. The relationship between this Parliament and the emerging democracy in Burma is an important one that we all value.

International Development Committee

Inquiry into Democracy and development in Burma

Announced on 4th September 2013

Since 2010 there have been remarkable changes in Burma. The UK Government considers that there is now a great opportunity to transform the lives of poor people in the country and DFID believes that British aid can now achieve a greater impact. Nevertheless, despite the political progress so far Burma remains one of the poorest countries in Asia. The country is off track to reach many of the Millennium Development Goals and suffers from poor health, including amongst the highest rates of malaria, malnutrition (especially amongst children) and tuberculosis in the world. Underlying ethnic tensions have the potential to undermine the reform process.

DFID's bilateral programme is set to increase from £31m in 2010-11 to £60m in 2013-14. The Committee will examine the key areas of DFID's programmes, including Health, Wealth Creation and Governance. Good governance and public financial management will be a particular focus of the Committee's inquiry. For more information on the IDC's Burma inquiry, please see this link-
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/international-development-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/democracy-and-development-in-burma/>

EARLY DAY MOTIONS

DAW BAWK JA AND THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN MYANMAR (BURMA)

Date tabled: 05.09.2013

That this House notes that Daw BawkJa was arrested in July 2013, and that the charges against her are currently unknown to her or her lawyer, and her trial is still pending; further notes that Daw BawkJa has actively supported local Kachin farmers against illegal land grabbing in 2009 and the resulting trial sided against the farmers; further notes that Daw BawkJa ran as a National Democratic Force candidate in the November 2010 election and lost by under 8,000 votes after 13,255 votes were deemed invalid; welcomes the political reforms and progress that have been made in Burma since the 2012 UN General Assembly Resolution on Human Rights in Myanmar (Burma) but notes that there are still concerns that need to be addressed, including the detention of political prisoners; further notes that President TheinSein is still discussing the opening of the UN Office of Human Rights in Burma; and calls on the Government to help facilitate the release of Daw BawkJa and to continue its support for the UN General Assembly Resolution on Human Rights in Myanmar (Burma).

Total Signatures: 1

ANTI-MUSLIM VIOLENCE IN BURMA

Date tabled: 11.07.2013

That this House expresses deep concern at the growing anti-Muslim violence in Burma; is concerned that the government of Burma has still not taken action against those inciting and organising violence; is further concerned by growing Buddhist nationalism in the country and that other religious minorities could also be targeted; is further concerned that, despite Muslims being the majority of the victims of violence, they also make up the vast majority of those being charged with violent offences; calls on the Government to significantly increase support for programmes promoting religious tolerance in Burma; and further calls on the Government to mobilise and co-ordinate an international task force to help address religious violence in Burma.

Total Signatures: 32

ROHINGYA MUSLIM PERSECUTION IN MYANMAR

Date tabled: 20.05.2013

That this House notes that the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar is not only continuing but sectarian violence is getting worse; further notes that a boat carrying well over 100 Rohingya Muslims fleeing a cyclone capsized on 14 May with many drowned; further notes that the Myanmar President Thein Sein has been invited to Washington to meet President Obama as part of the normalisation of relations with western countries; deplores the continued persecution of the Rohingya Muslims; and calls on the Government to take all necessary measures to get the Myanmar government to act to protect the Rohingya Muslims from sectarian persecution and violence.

Total Signatures: 14

Note: House of Lords written parliamentary questions were answered during summer recess.

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**for Human Rights, Democracy
& Development in Burma**